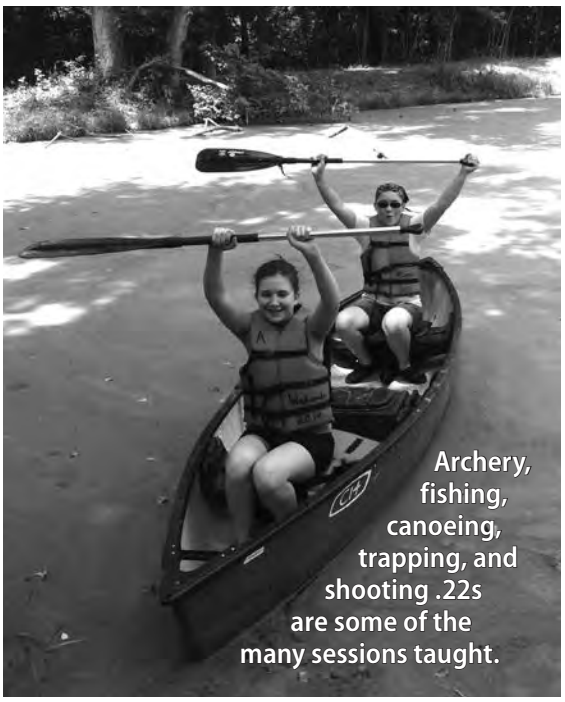
SOUTHWEST MISSOURI
Nature Connections
News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • May/June 2016

Learn And Enjoy Nature At *Discover Nature Girls Camp*

for girls 11 to 15 years of age


Archery, fishing, canoeing, trapping, and shooting .22s are some of the many sessions taught.

For eight years, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has been creating *Discover Nature Girls Camps* across the state. The first camp was held in northeast Missouri at Camp Colburn near Stoutsville. It was created by Conservation Agent Becky Robertson who recognized a need for young girls to learn amongst their peers and to have an outdoor program focused on them. The first years of the program proved successful and were received well by the public. When Agent Robertson moved to the St. Louis area, she began a second camp. With the success of another camp, Protection Division set a goal to have a *Discover Nature Girls Camp* in every region. By 2016, that was realized and every region in the state hosts their own unique camp. Through this program, conservation education has reached both rural and urban citizens. In the past eight years, nearly 1,000 girls have been hunter education certified through this course.

The idea to create a camp aimed at young girls was inspired by an experience Agent Becky Robertson had when she went through a Hunter Education Course as a young girl. Being the only girl in the class, she was unsure and felt intimidated. This is not an uncommon experience for girls interested in hunting and the outdoors; many find themselves the minority among men. Many programs are taught by and attended by men. *Discover Nature Girls Camp* intends to create a supportive learning environment for girls among their peers and to present to them an opportunity to experience outdoor activities away from competitive environments.

Conservation Agents, along with help from other staff , work months in advance to prepare for camp. Most camps are located at group camps like Camp Colburn in northeast Missouri while others are hosted elsewhere like the *Southwest Discover Nature Girls Camp* at YMCA Camp Wakonda near Ash Grove. Meanwhile, the Ozark area has hosted a more primitive camp; the campers float the river to a campsite and pitch tents. Most of the sessions are taught by Conservation Agents. Chaperones, sometimes female MDC workers but mostly mothers and grandmothers, stay with the girls throughout camp to make sure they attend sessions and stay safe. Chaperones also have the opportunity to participate in sessions and become hunter education certified.

Most camps across the state are three days and two nights. While the main focus of the camp is hunter education, many other activities are enjoyed. Archery, fishing, canoeing, trapping, and shooting .22s are some of the many sessions taught. First aid, pitching a tent, and starting a fire are also taught. For many girls, it is during this camp that they catch their first fish and shoot their first firearm. Near the end of camp, the girls' knowledge is put to the test during the "Safety Trail." The Safety Trail is a simulated hunt designed to test firearms safety as well as other knowledge taught during the hunter education sessions. The girls ask permission to hunt on a piece of property and are guided through a hunt. They are presented with opportunities to shoot a deer, coyote, and turkey. They must recognize safe shots and unsafe shots. When they come across an obstacle in the trail, they are required to demonstrate safe unloading and loading techniques as well as how to cross the obstacle safely. At the end of the hunt, they encounter a Conservation Agent who checks their hunting permits.

This is the third year a *Discover Nature Girls Camp* has been offered in the southwest part of the state. This camp is located at YMCA Camp Wakonda, 20 minutes west of Springfield. Camp lasts three days and two nights. It is limited to 40 girls between the ages of 11 to 15. There is no cost to the campers and chaperones to attend. Registration opens May 1 and applications may be picked up at the Springfield Regional Office or mailed. To apply for or inquire about *Discover Nature Girls Camp*, please contact Conservation Agent Kearby Bridges at 417-251-3693 or the Southwest Regional Office at 417-895-6880.

—Kearby Bridges
Stone County Conservation Agent

Joplin Office in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center

201 W. Riviera Drive, Suite B, Joplin, MO 64804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/292

The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna. From I-44, take exit 6, and turn south on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

JOPLIN OFFICE HOURS:
Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays.

AUDUBON CENTER HOURS:
Tuesday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM
Sunday: 1–5 PM (March–October)

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:
Programs are free. Call **417-629-3423** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

May and June Events

Sharing Nature With Mom

May 7 • Saturday • 2–3:30 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)
Registration required (children of all ages accompanied by mom)
Calling all moms and kids, join us for an outdoor learning adventure with the kids. After a hike to explore Walter Woods, everyone will create a craft especially for mom.

Basic .22 Rifle

May 16 • Monday • 5:30–8:30 PM
Fort Crowder Conservation Area (Neosho)
Registration required (ages 11 and up; ages 11–17 must be accompanied by an adult)
Develop a new lifelong skill by attending this basic program designed to teach beginning shooters safety while having fun and learning about bolt action .22 rifles. All equipment will be provided for you to practice your shooting skills.

Basic Camping And Fire Starting

May 23 • Monday • 6–8 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)
Registration required (all ages)
Discover how to make your next trip a fun-filled camping adventure! Learn the basics for setting up a great camp. Explore multiple techniques in fire starting and how to safely set your fire circle for your next outing.

Native Plant Sale

May 28 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)
No registration required (all ages)
Purchase beautiful and beneficial native plants for all areas of your landscape from Missouri Wildflowers Nursery. You can preorder the plants you want by placing your order with the nursery at least a week before and they will deliver it here on May 28. Go to <mowildflowers.net> to view their catalog and place any preorders. Discover the beauty and value of native plants by adding them to your landscape.

You Can Canoe

June 13 • Monday • 6–7:30 PM
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)
Registration required (ages 8 and up; ages 8–17 must be accompanied by an adult)
Learn the basics of canoeing from planning and safety tips to paddling techniques. Gain experience and confidence so you can discover the beautiful creeks and rivers in southwest Missouri. Dress for a water activity (creek shoes and clothes) and bring sunscreen. Canoes, paddles, and life vests will be provided.

Sharing Nature With Dad

June 14 • Tuesday • 6–7:30 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)
Registration required (children of all ages accompanied by dad)
Join us for an outdoor learning adventure with the kids while we hike at Walter Woods. After a hike, everyone will create a craft especially for dad.

Basic Shotgun

June 20 • Monday • 5:30–8:30 PM
Fort Crowder Conservation Area (Neosho)
Registration required (ages 11 and up; ages 11–17 must be accompanied by an adult)
This introduction class will focus on safe handling of firearms, types of actions, gauges, and chokes. Shooting stance, proper shoulder mounting, and fit will also be discussed. All equipment will be provided for you to practice your new skills.

Holiday Closings: May 9 • Truman Day and May 30 • Memorial Day

Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day

June 11 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON

No registration required
*(families, **only ages 15 and under may fish**)*

Join us for the 15th annual Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day. Registration starts at 8am at the pavilion, and then it is on to the education stations and the freshly-stocked lake for a morning of fishing fun. Bring your own pole; a limited number of loaner rods are available on a first-come basis. Bait and basic tackle will be provided at bait stations around the lake. Learn new skills from knot tying to casting a fly-rod. Conservation education stations make learning fun and interactive. Participating in education station activities earns kids the chance to register for the event prize drawing held at noon. Make it a great day of family memories at Kellogg Lake Park with conservation education, refreshments, prizes, and a chance for the kids to reel in a big one!

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • mdc.mo.gov/node/288

May and June Events

Shotgun Shooting Basics
May 7 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM
Registration required (all ages)
Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting, moving the shotgun, and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before arriving.

Free Shooting Day
May 8 • Sunday • 12 NOON–4:30 PM
No registration required (all ages)
Join us in celebration of Mother's Day. Bring Mom along and all families shoot for free.

.22 Rifle Shooting Basics
May 14 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM
Registration required (all ages)
Discover the joys of shooting one of the all-time favorite rifles–the .22 rifle. We will discuss rifle nomenclature, dominant eye, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, shooting positions, plus much more. You may use our rifles or plan to use your own. Please make sure your rifle is completely unloaded before you arrive at the range.

Day At The Range And Outdoor Adventure Fair
May 21 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM
Registration required (all ages)
Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center will be closed to public shooting for the *Day at the Range and Outdoor Adventure Fair* for persons with disabilities. This event is a partnership effort between SCIL (Southwest Center for Independent Living), the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Missouri Department of Conservation. If you have a friend or family member who is disabled, this is their event. Come and enjoy a day in the outdoors shooting, fishing, and participating in a variety of other nature-related activities at this one-day event. To register, please call SCIL (Southwest Center for Independent Living) at 417-886-1188 or go online to <SouthwestMissouriDayattheRange.com>.

Holiday Closings
May 9 • Truman Day
May 30 • Memorial Day

Handgun Basics
June 2 • Thursday • 6–10 PM
Registration required (ages 18 and up)
Join us to discover the basics of responsible handgun ownership and the joys of shooting. We will cover safety, handgun nomenclature, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, and much more. You will not need a firearm or ammunition at this classroom-only session, but you may bring your own or use ours for the shooting portion at a later date. If you have not previously participated in our *Handgun Basics* program, you may participate in this program.

Missouri Black Powder Society Shoot
June 3–5 • Friday–Sunday
9 AM–4:30 PM
Registration required (all ages)
Join the members of the Missouri Black Powder Society for a fun-filled event and learn how to load and fire a muzzleloading shotgun. This is the spring State Shotgun Shoot so there will be lots of different firearms and equipment on display and being used in the competition. For more information about this event, contact Larry Sunby at <missouriblackpowdersociety@yahoo.com>.

Shotgun Shooting Basics
June 4 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM
Registration required (all ages)
Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting, moving the shotgun, and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before arriving.

.22 Rifle Shooting Basics
June 11 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM
Registration required (all ages)
Discover the joys of shooting one of the all-time favorite rifles–the .22 rifle. We will discuss rifle nomenclature, dominant eye, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, shooting positions, plus much more. You may use our rifles or plan to use your own. Please make sure your rifle is completely unloaded before you arrive at the range.

Free Shooting Day
June 19 • Sunday • 12 NOON–4:30 PM
No registration required (all ages)
Join us in celebration of Father's Day. Bring Dad along and all families shoot for free.

To get to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, take US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road. Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

HOURS:
September 14–April 14
Monday and Thursday: 9 AM–4:30 PM
Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM
April 15–September 13
Monday: 9 AM–4:30 PM
Thursday: 9 AM–7:30 PM
Friday–Sunday: 12 NOON–4:30 PM

Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

FACILITIES AND FEES:
Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.
- Rifle/pistol range fee: $3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: $3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: $3 per person per hour
- Archery range: $3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: $20 per hour plus $3 per round of 25 clay targets

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:
Programs are free. Call **417-742-4361** or email <DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov> to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through a variety of natural communities. Call to schedule a naturalist-led program for your organized group.

CURRENT HOURS:

March 1–October 31

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM
Sunday: 12 NOON–5 PM
Closed Mondays and state holidays

Trails: Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–8 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call **417-888-4237** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

May Events

Primitive Skills Series Flint Knapping Demonstration

May 1 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

No registration required

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns for another primitive skills session. Watch him transform simple rocks into artistic and functional points similar to the ones used by early man for arrowheads and other tools. Stop by anytime and see the basics of flint knapping.

Take A Hike (formerly Hiking Club)

May 7 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–2 PM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 18–adult)

Explore the Homesteaders Trail on the Henning Conservation Area with Volunteer Naturalist Sandy Vaughn. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is approximately 4 miles and rated *moderate to difficult.***

May Events

Outdoor Treasure Hunting Geocaching Basics

May 7 • Saturday • 10 AM–12 NOON

Registration begins April 15 (ages 18–adult)

Join Corps of Engineers GIS Specialist Tricia Tannehill to learn a new outdoor skill. Geocaching is an outdoor "treasure" hunt using GPS units. We'll go over basic GPS use and then hit the trails to find some "treasures." GPS units provided. Dress for the weather.

Family Treasure Hunting

May 7 • Saturday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 8 and up with an adult mentor)

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn a new outdoor skill with Corps of Engineers GIS Specialist Tricia Tannehill. Geocaching is an outdoor "treasure" hunt using GPS units. We'll go over basic GPS use and then hit the trails to find some "treasures." GPS units provided. Dress for the weather.

Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

May 11 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

Birds Passing Through Warbler Walk

May 13 • Friday • 8:30–11 AM

May 14 • Saturday • 9–11:30 AM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 10–adult)

Celebrate *Migratory Bird Day* by learning to identify migrating warblers. Many species of warblers don't stay, so enjoy these passing birds now with guest Naturalist Bo Brown. Program will include thirty minutes indoors followed by a guided trail hike. Bring field guides and binoculars if you have them.

Conservation TEENS—Primitive Skills

May 14 • Saturday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 12–17)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Don Brink as he teaches and demonstrates primitive skills. Learn about making cordage, stone tools, and fires and see how arrowheads are made. Come and enjoy the fun.

Summer Hummers

May 15 • Sunday • 5–6:30 PM

Registration begins May 3 (all ages)

Ruby-throated hummingbird

Hummingbirds have returned to the Ozarks! Join bird bander Sarah Driver as she talks about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some.

Little Acorns programs are listed on page 5.

Missouri State Parks And Historic Sites—Challenges For Our Times

May 17 • Tuesday • 7–8:30 PM

Registration begins April 15 (ages 12–adult)

Dr. Susan Flader, co-author and editor of the new book *Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites: Exploring Our Legacy*, will share the interrelated stories of the book and state parks from the inception of the book at a low point for parks in 1982 to the 1992 first edition and on to the present. Learn about recent park issues and several new parks that will be opened later this year. A book sale (at a special price) and signing will follow the presentation. Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites are operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the book is made possible by the Missouri Parks Association (MPA)—a friends' organization united by their love for, and interest in, Missouri's State Parks.

Babes In The Woods

May 20 • Friday • 10–11 AM

May 21 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 0–2)

Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller.

The Birder's Year—Birding Tips For All Four Seasons

May 20 • Friday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 7–adult)

Join Nathan Swick–birder, blog manager for the American Birding Association, and author of *Birding For The Curious: The Easiest Way For Anyone To Explore The Incredible World Of Birds*–as he shares opportunities to make the best of your birding experiences throughout the seasons. From spring warblers to fall hawkwatches to winter landfill viewing, learn how to tailor your birding excursions to the season and how to read the weather forecasts to find the most birds.

Our Nesting Birds

May 26 • Thursday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 7–adult)

Late spring and early summer are busy times for birds. Volunteer Naturalist Myra Scroggs will help find common nesting birds, as well as some that are not so easy to spot, during this indoor and outdoor program.

Conservation Kids—Archery

May 26 • Thursday • 5–6:30 PM OR 6:45–8:15 PM

Registration begins May 3 (ages 7–12)

You don't have to be a hunter to become a skilled archer. Archery is a great family sport for all ages. Learn about archery equipment, shooting safety, and proper shooting techniques and practice your new skills during this outdoor meeting. No experience is necessary and all equipment will be provided. This activity takes place on the archery range which is not ADA accessible. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287

June Events

Trail Trivia
June 4 • Saturday • 9 AM–4 PM
No registration required
Test your nature knowledge to celebrate *National Trails Day*! Trek the trails while answering nature-related questions along the way. Stop by the nature center anytime to pick up your question sheet and then return to check your answers, claim your prize, and learn about different conservation areas around Springfield.

Primitive Skills Series Fire And Flintstone
June 5 • Sunday • 1–3 PM
Registration begins May 17 (ages 12–adult)
Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns to demonstrate how to start fires without matches and butane. Different primitive fire-making techniques will be demonstrated. Afterward, try your hand at starting a fire the primitive way.

Summer Hummers
June 5 • Sunday • 5–6:30 PM
Registration begins May 17 (all ages)
Hummingbirds have returned to the Ozarks! Join bird bander Sarah Driver as she talks about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some.

Medicinal And Edible Plants Of The Ozarks
June 8 • Wednesday • 5–6:15 PM OR 6:30–7:45 PM
Registration begins May 17 (ages 15–adult)
Join Bob Liebert, owner of Teeter Creek Herbs and author of *Common Medicinal Herbs Of The Ozarks*, for an indoor program and guided hike to learn how Native Americans and early pioneers relied on plants for curing their ailments and feeding their families. His book will be available to purchase and to have autographed.

Conservation TEENS Overnight Camping Trip
June 9–10 • Thursday, 2 PM–Friday, 12 NOON
Registration begins June 1 (ages 12–17)
Enjoy an overnight campout at Schell-Osage Conservation Area. We'll tour the area and fish the lakes for bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish. Fishing equipment and bait will be provided or you may bring your own. Participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Transportation, food, and drinks will be provided. Additional equipment will be required.

Babes In The Woods
June 10 • Friday • 10–11 AM
June 11 • Saturday • 10–11 AM
Registration begins June 1 (ages 0–2)
Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller.

Beginner Archery
June 11 • Saturday • 9–10:30 AM OR 10:30 AM–12 NOON
Registration begins June 1 (ages 10–adult)
You don't have to be a hunter to become a skilled archer. Learn a new skill and spend time practicing. No experience is necessary and archery equipment will be provided. This program takes place on the archery range which is not ADA accessible.

Nature Art With A Chinese Brushstroke
June 14 • Tuesday • 1–2:30 PM OR 2:45–4:15 PM
Registration begins June 1 (ages 8–adult)
Art instructor and nature enthusiast Hing Wah Hatch will increase your powers of observation as she demonstrates, step-by-step, how to capture the essence of local plants and animals through Chinese-style painting. Participants will go home with more nature knowledge and their own artistic masterpiece.

Firefly Frolic
June 14 • Tuesday • 8–9 PM
Registration begins June 1 (all ages)
Fireflies have intrigued and fascinated children and adults on countless summer evenings. Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan to learn everything you ever wanted to know about nature's "flashlights." Bring your flashlight and join the fun.

Exercise Your Mind And Explore Your Senses
June 17 • Friday • 9 AM–12 NOON
No registration required (all ages)
Exercise your mind and explore your sense of sight, smell, touch, and hearing as we team with the Springfield-Greene County Library during their summer reading program, *Exercise Your Mind*. Bring your entire family and have fun enjoying indoor/outdoor activities, stories, crafts, and more as we compare our senses with those of the wild animals around us. Drop by anytime and plan on spending at least an hour. The Mobile Library will be present during the program so bring your library card.

Take A Hike (formerly Hiking Club)
June 18 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM
Registration begins June 1 (ages 18–adult)
Take a naturalist-led hike on the trails of the Springfield Conservation Nature Center. Learn about the flora and fauna of the five ecosystems on this area as well as the land management that takes place. Bring water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is 3 miles and rated *moderate in difficulty.***

Conservation Kids—"Tree"rific Trees
June 23 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM
Registration begins June 1 (ages 7–12)
It's time for a "tree"rific evening of "tree"mendous fun. Learn tree facts, play games, and make crafts to discover that trees have many of the same characteristics as people. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Little Acorns

Please limit to one per month.

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

May Events
Registration begins May 3 (ages 3–6)

Backyard Birds
May 14 • Saturday • 11 AM
Come celebrate *Migratory Bird Day* with us! Learn the calls of several birds and how to attract them to your yard.

Bigmouth Bullfrogs
May 20 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM
From tadpoles to adult bullfrogs, we'll learn the life changes of frogs and why they are such good leapers.

Roly-Poly Roundup
May 26 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM
Hey, partners, join the roly-poly fun as Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan returns for this year's roundup!

June Events
Registration begins June 1 (ages 3–6)

"Tree"mendous Trees
June 18 • Saturday • 11 AM
June 28 • Tuesday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM
Trees are "tree"mendously important. Bring your favorite Big Person and find out why.

Let's Go Camping
June 23 • Thursday • 11 AM OR 1:30 PM
June 25 • Saturday • 11 AM
Camping can be fun for all ages! Join us at our indoor campsite to experience what it's like to spend a night in the woods. You'll sit in a tent, toast some pretend s'mores, and gather around the campfire for a story.

Temporary Exhibits

May • **Artwork by Members of the 205 Gallery** Ozark, MO

• **Fins and Feathers**
Original fish and bird artwork by Christian Dixon

June • **Landscape Painting In Plein (Open) Air**
Artwork by Members of the Springfield Plein Air Club

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • mdc.mo.gov/node/290

The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

FACILITY HOURS:

June–July–August:
Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–6 PM

Remainder of Year
Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM

Closed all state holidays

AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:
4 AM–10 PM
The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:
Programs are free. Call **417-334-4865**, Ext. 0, to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

FISHING LAKE TANEYCOMO:
Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure of the entire lake including fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit <mdc.mo.gov/node/5603>.

May and June Events

International Migratory Bird Day

May 14 • Saturday • 10–11:30 AM
Registration required (families, ages 12 and up)
In celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty, we will be focusing on the beauty and diversity of birds that live and migrate across the Ozarks. In addition to a short indoor presentation on the amazing migrating birds, we will go on a short hike to see our local birds. Bring a bottle of water, hiking shoes, and your binoculars.

Fly-Fishing Basics

June 24 • Friday • 10–11:30 AM
Registration required (families, ages 12 and up)
Fly-fishing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors. This class will help beginners learn the basics of fly-fishing. You will get to set up your line, practice casting, and learn what lures work best with a fly rod. The class is only instruction and demonstration; we will not be fishing in Taneycomo.

Family Fishing Fair

Saturday
June 11
9 AM–2 PM

*No registration required (families, **only ages 15 and under may fish**)*

Join us for our annual free event where you get to fish in a stocked pond and learn how to be a better angler. In addition to being able to go fishing with your family, several activity stations will help you learn how to tie knots, fillet and cook fish, bait and fly-cast, rig up a pole, make fish print art, and fish ethically. Free goodie bags will be given to every kid and there will be a drawing for a free rod/reel combo at the end of the day. There will be a limited number of loaner fishing poles, but you won't have to wait to fish if you bring your own pole and cooler. The *My First Fish* station is for anyone who catches their very first fish. Bring your first fish to this station and you will have your photo taken and a certificate will be mailed to you. At noon there will be a special performance by the *Fishin' Magicians* who will introduce you and your family to the importance of water resources and amaze you with their fun magic. Call for more details.

What Lives In The Water Can Help You Catch Fish

There is an amazing world that lives in our Ozarks streams and lakes. This world includes a variety of aquatic invertebrates that look strange and yet are a welcome sight to fish and humans alike. Some aquatic insects such as mayflies, dobsonflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies are indicators of good water quality. Other critters can live in a wider variety of conditions and have even stranger names like dragonflies, damselflies, and midges.

Knowing how to imitate these critters as lures can help you catch fish such as trout and sunfish. But timing can be everything. Many of these aquatic insects hatch at different times of the year. So knowing not only what they are, but when they are hatching is an important advantage when fishing. Good anglers know how to "match the hatch" by looking under the rocks and logs of a stream or lake BEFORE tying on any lure or fly. By matching the insects that are currently hatching, you will have a better chance of catching a fish. When matching these hatching invertebrates, you are imitating a natural food that our local fish have been enjoying for centuries. Even if you are not fishing, take the time to gently pick up a rock or two and look for the aquatic insects that live in our Ozarks waters. Don't forget to put the rocks back.

For more information about these aquatic insects, visit your local Missouri Department of Conservation office and ask for the free brochure *Life Within The Water.* You can also go to <on.mo.gov/1UVQqeL> to see many aquatic invertebrates and great information about these wonderful critters. Becoming familiar with these aquatic insects will help you be a better angler and a better steward of our precious water resources.

—John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager

Holiday Closings: May 9 • Truman Day and May 30 • Memorial Day

Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • mdc.mo.gov/node/257

Fishing Fun For Family And Friends

Have you ever found yourself stuck inside on a beautiful day watching fishing on television? Are you wishing you could experience the thrill of catching fish, but don't know where to begin? Maybe you have set your rod and reel in the closet for a number of years and don't feel like you'd know what to do with them any longer? Perhaps you're looking for a fun outdoor activity for the entire family, but don't know how to teach your children a skill set that you were never taught yourself? If any of these questions apply to you or your family, look no further than the *Discover Nature–Fishing* programs offered by the Missouri Department of Conservation!

Discover Nature–Fishing is a series of four introductory lessons designed to give students a strong foundation, or refresher, in basic fishing techniques. In lesson one, students are introduced to the parts of a rod/reel combo, basic fish identification, and safe fish handling practices. They will also learn how to attach a bobber and sinker, cast, set the hook, and retrieve a fish. In lesson two, students are taught how to tie on their own hook, how to bait their hook with natural baits, and are given an introduction on proper stocking of a tackle box. Lesson three discusses the biology of fish, providing in-depth information on fish identification, handling, anatomy, life cycle, and habitats in which different species of fish may be found. Lesson four completes the series with information on different types of artificial lures and also takes a look at fishing regulations in Missouri. Each lesson will include a fishing portion, where the students will be able to apply the information they have learned that day while fishing a stocked pond. All equipment and bait will be provided.

The thrill of catching a fish

These lessons are offered at no cost and are open to individuals ages 7 and older. All family members, and family friends, over the age of 7 are also invited to register for these lessons. Children will need to have a parent or guardian with them at all times, even if that parent does not wish to take the course. Courses are offered in Springfield, Branson, and Joplin areas on Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 am. Registration is required as class size is limited to 20 students. Please contact the Southwest Regional Office at 417-895-6880 to register. More information and a complete schedule of classes can be found at <mdc.mo.gov/node/27175>.

— Liz Gray, Angler Education Assistant

The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

HOURS: Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays

PHONE: 417-895-6880

Free Fishing Days . . . June 11 and 12

Any person may fish state waters without permit, trout permit, and prescribed daily tag during *Free Fishing Days*. It's the perfect opportunity to try a new sport or introduce someone to fishing. Special permits still may apply at some county, city, or private areas.

Kids' Fishing Day
May 7 • Saturday • 8 AM–4 PM
Bennett Spring Fish Hatchery and State Park (Lebanon, MO)
Call 417-532-4418 for details

Kids' Fishing Day
May 14 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM
Roaring River Fish Hatchery and State Park (Cassville, MO)
Call 417-847-2430 for details

Kids' Fishing Day
June 3 • Friday • 9 AM–12 NOON and 1–3 PM
Neosho National Fish Hatchery (Neosho, MO)
Call 417-451-0554 for details

35th Annual Kids' Fishing Fun Day
June 4 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–12 NOON
Rutledge-Wilson Farm Community Park (Springfield, MO)
Call 417-864-1049 for details

Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day
June 11 • Saturday • 8 AM–12 NOON
Kellogg Lake (Carthage, MO)
See page 2 for details

Family Fishing Fair
June 11 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM
Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery (Branson, MO)
See page 6 for details

Kids' Fishing Day
August 20• Saturday • 7 AM–8 PM
Roaring River Fish Hatchery and State Park (Cassville, MO)
Call 417-847-2430 for details

Nature Connections Newsletter

To begin receiving the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To begin receiving the newsletter electronically by email, go online to <mdc.mo.gov/govdelivery>, enter your email and subscribe to "News, Events and Newsletters - Southwest Region."

Tree Pest Clinic

at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center

June 14 • Tuesday • 9 AM–1 PM

No registration required

Do your trees have disease or insect problems? Bring infected twigs (at least 12" long), branches, or leaves to Urban Foresters for identification and a solution to your tree problems. Stop by anytime.

Project Learning Tree For Educators Workshop

at the Springfield Regional Office

June 28 • Tuesday • 9 AM–4 PM

Cost: $20.00

Educators will receive a *Project Learning Tree* activity book, hands-on instruction, supplies, and materials to assist in teaching.

For more information, contact: Jay Barber, Conservation Education Consultant <Jay.Barber@mdc.mo.gov> 417-895-6881, Extension 1643

20% off Special

This concise, easy-to-carry field guide will help you identify trees in your yard, neighborhood, or natural area. There are 174 species described, with visual organization of species by leaf arrangement and shape. Easy-to-understand descriptions, range maps, and full-color illustrations add to the guide's appeal.

Featured Publication for May and June

Available at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and Southwest Regional Office.

Conservation Showcase:

Southwest Missouri's Trout Ribbon Areas

Trout fishing is a popular activity in Missouri accounting for about 14 percent of all angling effort. Trout habitat, however, is limited with approximately 1 percent of Missouri waters currently managed as year-round trout fisheries. In addition to Missouri's 4 trout parks and Lake Taneycomo, 3 different types of trout management areas exist in cold-water streams that contain suitable habitat for trout. These areas are managed as Blue, Red, and White Ribbon Trout Areas. **Blue Ribbon Trout Areas** include parts of large, cold rivers with excellent trout habitat and smaller streams that support naturally-reproducing rainbow trout. Harvest is limited to maintain the maximum density of adult trout, create excellent catch-and-release fishing, and provide the occasional chance to harvest a trophy. **Red Ribbon Trout Areas** are streams with high-quality habitat. They provide catch-and-release fishing and a chance to harvest quality-size trout. Finally, **White Ribbon Trout Areas** are cold-water streams capable of supporting trout populations year-round. They provide great opportunities for catching and harvesting trout and the occasional chance to harvest a large trout. Three of these special trout management areas exist in southwest Missouri.

CRANE CREEK: Located in extreme southwest Lawrence County and northwest Stone County, Crane Creek flows approximately 25 miles before its confluence with the James River. Its headwaters are largely spring fed, which supplies cold water year-round. Since the 1880s, Crane Creek has boasted a wild rainbow trout population derived from early stockings from California's McCloud River stock. This population has thrived over the years with very few additional stockings. Wire Road Conservation Area (WRCA) encompasses 818 acres in the upper watershed and straddles the town of Crane. In visual surveys conducted in 2015, approximately 415 trout per mile were observed on the upper WRCA and 673 trout per mile were observed on the lower WRCA. These are the highest values recorded since 1994. The majority of fish observed in 2015 ranged from 5 to 10 inches indicating good reproduction. Numerous quality-sized fish in the 10- to 18-inch range were also present, including at least 30 that were larger than the minimum length limit of 18 inches. Crane Creek is currently managed as a Blue Ribbon Trout Area in the upper 8 miles to maximize and sustain the fishery. While harvest is assumed minimal, one fish per day at least 18-inches long is allowed and only flies and artificial lures are permitted.

CAPPS CREEK: Capps Creek is a southwest Missouri spring-fed stream located in Newton County southwest of Monett. From its origins near Purdy, it flows westward to its confluence with Shoal Creek. It is classified as a White Ribbon Trout Area, allowing for year-round trout fishing. It has been managed as a put-and-take rainbow trout fishery since the 1960s with annual stockings of catchable-sized fish. Brown trout were introduced starting in 1991. Approximately 500 to 1,000 brown trout are released annually, creating additional fishing opportunities with larger fish available. Brown trout must be at least 15 inches in length to be legally harvestable. Exploitation and harvest by anglers is very high in Capps Creek. Fall electrofishing survey catch rates are consistently less than 5 rainbow trout per hour indicating most stocked fish have been caught and harvested. In contrast, brown trout fall electrofishing survey catch rates are 20 to 25 fish per hour, indicating that they are less subject to capture by anglers and protected by the 15-inch length limit. The stream's trout management area is located on Capps Creek Conservation Area owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation.

HICKORY CREEK: Hickory Creek, located in Newton County, originates from a series of springs south and east of Neosho including Monarch Spring, Elm Spring, Bartholic Spring, Hearrell Spring, and MacMahon Spring and flows northwesterly terminating in Shoal Creek. Public access is very good as most of the trout area is within the city of Neosho's Morse Park. Hickory Creek was stocked with trout beginning January 1, 2005. Hickory Creek is managed as a White Ribbon Trout Area. However, there is a catch-and-release season from November 1 through the last day in February. During this time, all trout must be released unharmed immediately after being caught and only flies and artificial lures may be used for all species. Rainbow trout persist in the stream year-round but are subject to fairly rapid exploitation after stocking.

—Shane Bush and Rick Horton, Fisheries Management Biologists